

protrusions that bite into the mat toward the male grommet flange.

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21. (New) The combination of Claim 15, wherein at least one of the female and male grommet flanges includes a pin that bites into the mat to prevent relative rotation between the outer and inner tube portions.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

A substitute specification has been provided to facilitate the correction of minor errors, to provide antecedents for claim terminology, and to improve the description. No new matter has been introduced.

Claim 1 has been amended to overcome the claim objections, and Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

The preamble of Claims 2 and 3 has been amended for clarity, and minor amendments have been made in Claims 4 and 6 for clarity. These amendments were not required for patentability.

Claim 1 has also been amended to clarify the manner in which this claim distinguishes patentably from Kasai, the prior art relied upon in the rejection of Claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claim 1 now recites, inter alia, that the outer tube portion of the female grommet projects axially beyond the flange of the female grommet for insertion into the hole formed in the floor mat. See Figs. 9-11 of Applicant's drawings, for example. Nothing of the sort is taught or suggested by the prior art.

In Kasai, the seat plate 6 does not have a tube portion that projects axially beyond the seat plate, and the seat plate does not have a tube portion that enters a hole in the fabric 12. See Figs. 4-8C of the reference. The deficiency of Kasai is not cured by the secondary reference, Bailey et al., relied upon in the rejection of Claims 3-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Accordingly, Claim 1 and the claims dependent thereon should be allowed.

New Claims 7-21 have been added to provide more comprehensive patent protection. The annular concavity (or concavities) recited in the new claims in the context of

the recited inventions clearly distinguishes patentably from the prior art.


This application is now believed to be clearly in condition for allowance.

Marked-up copies of the substitute specification (with abstract) and the amended claims are attached.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees due in connection with processing this Amendment, or credit any overpayment if applicable, to Deposit Account No. 02-2550.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marked-up copy of Claims - 10/017,094

1. (Amended) A mat fastener for connection to a floor mat of an automobile comprising:

- a. a male grommet made of a resin material;
- b. a female grommet made of a resin material;
- c. the female grommet having an outer tube portion having opposite open ends and adapted to be inserted into a hole formed in the floor mat;
- d. the female grommet having a flange formed at [the] an outer periphery of one of the ends of the outer tube portion and [having] being adapted to be in contact with one [of the] side [surfaces] surface of the mat, the outer tube portion projecting axially beyond the flange of the female grommet for insertion into the hole formed in the floor mat;
- e. the male grommet having an inner tube portion having opposite open ends and adapted to be inserted into the outer tube portion of the female grommet and a flange formed at [the] an outer periphery of one of the ends of the inner tube portion;

- f. the flange of the male grommet adapted to be in contact with [the other of the] another side [surfaces] surface of the mat; wherein:
- g. each of the outer and inner tube portions is provided with an engagement means for coupling the female and male grommets to each other so that, upon engagement thereof, one of the flanges of the grommets is adapted to be brought into contact with one of the side surfaces of the mat around the mat hole and the other flange of the grommets is adapted to be brought into contact with the other side surface of the mat, whereby the mat fastener is fastened to the mat with [sandwiching] the mat sandwiched between the flanges;
- h. one of the flanges of the male and female grommets has a larger outside dimension than that of the other thereof; and
- i. each of the flanges has an outer peripheral portion formed in a curve shape to be directed toward the [mate] mat to allow each of the flanges to bite into the mat [in the state] when the male and female grommets are coupled to each other by the engagement means.

2. (Amended) The [combination] mat fastener claimed in Claim 1 wherein:

- a. the flange of the female grommet is formed in a circular plate of a predetermined diameter;
 - b. the flange of the male grommet is formed in a circular plate of predetermined diameter smaller than the diameter of the flange of the female grommet;
 - c. the outer peripheral portion of the male grommet flange is formed in a curved shape to allow the male grommet flange to bite into the mat [in the direction of] toward the female grommet flange; and
 - d. the outer peripheral portion of the female grommet flange is formed in a curved shape to allow the female grommet flange to bite into the mat [in the direction of] toward the male grommet flange.
3. (Amended) The [combination] mat fastener claimed in Claim 2 in combination with a floor mat, wherein:
- a. the floor mat includes an upper carpet layer and a lower rubber base layer;
 - b. the male grommet is disposed on the side of the carpet layer of the floor mat; and

- c. the female grommet is disposed on the side of the base layer of the floor mat.
- 4. (Amended) The combination claimed in Claim 3 wherein:
 - a. the outer peripheral portion of the female flange includes a plurality of circumferentially spaced [annular] protrusions formed thereon to extend [in the direction of] toward the base layer.
- 6. (Amended) The combination claimed in Claim 5 wherein:
 - a. each of the female and male grommets is integrally formed [thereon] of a resin material; and
 - b. the resin material has a low elastic modulus and is substantially deformable.